



**Testimony of Sotonye Otunba Payne, AFSCME Local 749  
Re: SB 964, Judiciary Committee  
March 6, 2019**

Good afternoon Chairpersons Stafstrom and Holder-Winfield; Ranking Members Rebinbas and Kissell; and members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Sotonye Otunba-Payne. I am a Court Reporting Monitor assigned to the Judicial District in New Haven. I am proud to have over two decades of dedicated service to the people of Connecticut.

I am also member of AFSCME Local 749. Our union membership includes more than 200 of my colleagues who perform vital court transcription services.

**I am here to speak on SB 964, An Act Concerning Court Operations.**

I am not here to speak against the bill as a whole. I do want to speak against proposed language within the bill, in section 5. I believe this language opens the door to outsourcing our court transcription work.

This is work that must be performed outside of the normal hours of daytime court operations. Court recording monitors perform the duties with utmost precision, integrity, timeliness and professionalism. We do not get a dime of overtime. We are paid on a per page fee set by statute.

My colleagues and I believe the Branch's pursuit of outsourcing would lead to the elimination of our court transcription work and ultimately our jobs. I would also like to point out that court recording monitors are nearly 100 percent female. Outsourcing to a private corporation would be devastating to us, to our families, and to the communities where we live, work and pay taxes.

Most important of all, outsourcing transcription will also compromise the integrity of the legal process. Nobody understands what happens in the courts better than we do - certainly not a private corporation. We are invested in our work. We interact with judges, attorneys and many others who are part of the judicial proceedings. We are the eyes and ears of the system. We work nights and weekends to ensure that court transcripts are flawless. We hold ourselves to very high standards. There is accountability.

In closing, I ask you to protect the quality and integrity of our work as court recording monitors. Please make sure sections 5 through 9 of SB 964 remove any reference to the hiring and employment of outside parties.

Thank you for listening. I am happy to answer your questions.